• DAMAGE • THE LAST DAYS OF CHEZ NOUS •
• BLADE RUNNER – THE DIRECTOR'S CUT •
• Woody Allen's SHADOWS AND FOG •
• Abel Ferrara's BAD LIEUTENANT • MEAN STREETS •
• THE LIVING END • ONE FALSE MOVE •

INFORMATION

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DAMAGE

Main Films

Please see the calendar on the back cover for performance times.

Damage (18)

March 1-11

Director: Louis Malle. U.K./France, 1992.
Starring: Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche, Miranda Richardson.
Colour. Dolby Stereo. 110 mins.

In Louis Malle's controversial film of Josephine Hart's best-selling novel, Jeremy Irons plays respected Tory MP Stephen Fleming, a junior minister in the foreign office who looks set for even higher things and has an extremely supportive wife in Miranda Richardson's Ingrid to stand beside him all the way. But this cosy situation is shattered when he bumps into his journalist son Martyn and the latter's French girlfriend Anna (Juliette Binoche) at an official reception, instantly becoming aware of a raw attraction between himself and the young woman.

It doesn't take long before they're in the midst of a secretive but ecstatically physical affair, purposely making love in the most precarious of circumstances to increase their excitement in each other. Stephen begins to learn of an emotional side to his punctiliously ordered life that he'd never before imagined existed, ignoring the dark hints that Anna drops about a disturbed and tragic past and seemingly immured to the prospective family turmoil that might erupt should their deception be uncovered. It takes the surprise announcement of Martin and Anna's engagement and the enigmatic warnings issued by her mother (Leslie Caron) at a celebratory lunch to raise the tension to a level where something simply has to give.

David Hare's screen adaptation opens out the novel's interior monologue, which follows Fleming's account of the affair, and both his literate scripting and Irons' almost flawless performance in the demanding central role help to lend the material a depth of tragic impact de-spite the odd soap opera element in the plotting. For someone who has made movies all over the world, Malle is typically sensitive to the English establishment milieu. Yet even though the explicit couplings are hardly underplayed, you feel that all along he's really interested in the shifting interior landscapes of the characters—something that might explain Binoche's minimalist, even sphinx-like approach to her part.

At any rate, *Damage* is certainly a class act, beautifully lit by British cameraman Peter Biziou and impressively scored by Kieslowski colla-borator Zbigiew Preisner. Hovering somewhere between introspective art movie terrain and the glossy mainstream melodrama, it makes a startling comparison piece with Malle's earlier *Atlantic City* in charting the eternally disruptive force of romantic obsession.

Trevor Johnston

The Last Days of Chez Nous (15)

March 5-11

Director: Gillian Armstrong. Australia, 1991.
Starring: Lisa Harrow, Bruno Ganz, Kerry Fox.
Colour. Dolby Stereo. 96 mins.

Gillian Armstrong *(My Brilliant Career)* returns to Australia with *The Last Days of Chez Nous*, and also returns to form after a less than happy spell in the U.S. Armstrong brings a luminous intelligence to writer Helen Garner's thoughtful portrayal of the uncertainties and fluctuations of love within a dysfunctional Sydney family of three women and their respective husband, step-father and brother-in-law.

Kerry Fox, an actress at once ungainly and alluring, excels as Vicky, the restless and selfish half-child who returns from a disastrous European romance and marches back into the home and life of her quietly unhappy sister Beth, sending fatal shockwaves through her already shaky marriage. Lisa Harrow's Beth, a writer more certain of her printed page than her real life, is a less alarming but equally accomplished performance, and the strangely enmeshed lives of these two women, one old enough to be the younger's mother, provides the film's emotional core.

Beth's French husband J.P. (Bruno Ganz) lumbers, skips and stumbles through his successive entanglements with each sister with the practised insouciance of the self-important European. But even Ganz's punch-bag jowls cannot distract from the film's trio of red-headed protagonists, completed by Beth's daughter Annie (Miranda Otto), a pubescent stripling uncertain of which role model—mother or aunt—to adopt.

Against a backdrop of decayed and new-born relationships, another, passive protagonist emerges: Chez Nous itself. Assisted by Geoffrey Simpson's lushly twilit cinematography and Janet Patterson's comfortably chaotic sets, Armstrong places Chez Nous at the centre of the film's action. It is at once refuge and war zone: a retreat from the outside world and the site of the film's cruellest betrayals.

Never melodramatic and always captivating, Armstrong's eccentric household is determinedly Australian but engaged in internal battles and emotional struggles that will resonate through any audience.

Oscar Moore/*Screen International*

Orlando (PG)

March 12-25

Director: Sally Potter. U.K., 1992.
Starring: Tilda Swinton, Billy Zane, Lothaire Bluteau.
Colour. Dolby Stereo SR. 93 mins.

Four years in the making, *Orlando* bursts onto the screen in a blaze of glory. A worthy tribute to the fortitude and artistic talent of director Sally Potter and producer Christopher Sheppard, *Orlando* is a witty, intelligent, sumptuous film that will stand as one of the best art-house films of the year.

Tilda Swinton plays the eponymous, time-travelling hero, born in the Elizabethan age and bequeathed a stately home by the Queen (Quentin Crisp) on the proviso that he never grow old. The story takes him through an unfulfilled love affair with a visiting Russian (Charlotte Valandrey) then forward to Constantinople in 1700, where, as English ambassador, his experience of war causes him to wake up in 1750 as a woman.

As a woman in eighteenth century high society, Orlando is presented with an ultimatum: marry or lose the house. The action then moves to 1850, when Orlando meets and falls for Shelmerdine (Billy Zane), an American political activist, but the affair ends with him returning to the US and Orlando losing her inheritance. As the film moves to the present day, Orlando is still stateless and disinherited, but wiser for her experiences.

ORLANDO

Untroubled by the prospect of filming Virginia Woolf's "un-filmable" novel, Potter glides through the story with an assured hand. She is clearly intimate with her subject and takes on the temporal and sexual somersaults without a flicker of hesitation, an assurance that at once woos and convinces the audience, who can happily sit back and allow the film to work its magic.

Potter offers up a taste of each period with a captivating economy, and her succinct script delivers pertinent comments on the state of Europe, the British condition, colonialism, war, sex, love and romance. Swinton's ironic asides to camera involve the audience directly in her tale and evoke sympathy for her plight.

Orlando is a visual treat. On a modest budget, Ben van Os and Jan Roelfs and costume designer Sandy Powell have created a lavish background to the drama, recreating each period with a stunning attention to detail. The frozen Thames of Elizabethan England built by Russia's Lenfilm studios is particularly breathtaking. . . . With virtuoso acting support, *Orlando* is a tribute to the best of European film-making.

Patricia Dobson/*Screen International*

Blade Runner – The Director's Cut (15)

March 26-April 1

Director: Ridley Scott. U.S.A., 1982.
Starring: Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young.
Colour. Panavision. Dolby Stereo. 117 mins.

At last, an opportunity to see Ridley Scott's seminal 1982 sci-fi movie as the director intended. And now that it's been restored, it is painfully obvious that all its former faults were introduced by nervous studio executives who thought the film's narrative was too confusing and its ending too bleak. The redundancy of blade runner Rick Deckard's clarifying (sic) voice-over narration is reinforced here, because the plot makes more sense without it; the now removed 'happy ending' made no sense either, completely contradicting what we already knew about the replicant

Rachel's built-in obsolescence. With one crucial exception, the restored material (mostly expansions of existing scenes) is less radical in its effects, although the extended romantic scenes between Deckard and Rachel do help to flesh out their relationship. Ironically, this 'restored' version is therefore more notable for what has been removed than for what has been put back, and is slightly shorter than the old one.

Although now ten years old, Scott's film not only astonishes us anew with its dense visual tapestry of futuristic images, but also reminds us of how it defined one of the primary themes of 80s sci-fi cinema. Everything that was innovative and astonishing remains: Lawrence G Paull's futuristic cityscape, Jordan Cronenweth's darkly glistening cinematography, Douglas Trumbull's visual effects, Vangelis's electronic score, and, best of all, Rutger Hauer's emotionally complex portrayal of the doomed replicant Batty. In short, Scott's director's cut takes us back to a more perfect future.

In visual terms, the 'Tech Noir' ambience of James Cameron's *The Terminator*, the multi-cultural mêlée that is Mars in Paul Verhoeven's *Total Recall*, and the animated urban future of *Akira* all owe a debt to *Blade Runner*. Thematically, Scott's film focuses on the synthetic man-machine, and the idea of memory as the defining element of humanness. "More human than human, that's our motto", says Tyrell, eponymous founder of the corporation which designed and manufactured the renegade repli-

cants being tracked by blade runner Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford). And these Nexus 6 replicants were the prototypes for a long line of cinematic cyborgs: recent models have included Peter Weller's RoboCop, and artificially revitalised UniSols Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren in *Universal Soldier*.

These men-machines are indistinguishable from humans, except that they feel no emotion and have no memory. Condemned to live in a perpetual present, they exhibit human characteristics only when, as in the case of both RoboCop and Van Damme's UniSol, they flash back to images of their earlier, human life. The Nexus 6 replicants in *Blade Runner*, being entirely synthetic, have no such human past, so they have been provided with memory implants. The replicant Rachel (Sean Young) is devastated to discover that her treasured childhood memories are in fact those of Tyrell's niece. More cryptically, the 'unicorn dream' experienced by Deckard is echoed later by an origami figure left by police chief Bryant's right-hand man Gaff (Edward James Olmos)—possibly hinting that this too is an implant, and Deckard himself a replicant. Lines that failed to detonate in the earlier version therefore have a greater resonance here, such as when, during their climactic battle, Batty (Hauer) taunts Deckard (Ford) with the words: "Come on Deckard, show me what you're made of".

Nigel Floyd

Shadows and Fog (15)

March 26-April 1

Director: Woody Allen. U.S.A., 1992.
Starring: Woody Allen, Mia Farrow, John Malkovich, Madonna, Donald Pleasence, Jodie Foster.
Black and white. Dolby Stereo SR. 86 mins.

Woody Allen's deliciously strange *Shadows and Fog* is about the Known and the Unknowable. Part tragedy, part comedy; part human puppet-show, part charabanc tour through the dark night of the soul; it is a fantasy prelude in *film noir* tones to the later *Husbands and Wives*.

In America many hated it: mainly because there are so many plots bubbling at once that it is like being in a mad wizard's kitchen. We have Allen himself as Mr Kleinman, the bumbling coward roped into a posse hunting a mass killer in a European town. We have circus sword-swallower Mia Farrow, flouncing out on husband John Malkovich after he has slept with trapeze artist Madonna. We have the star-packed brothel (Kathy Bates, Lily Tomlin, Jodie Foster) where Farrow spends a fugitive night. We have Farrow-smitten student John Cusack; mad doctor Donald Pleasance; neighbour Kate Nelligan . . .

Whoah. Enough, you cry. How many films are being reviewed here under one title? But the multi-story skittishness of *Shadows and Fog* is its charm. If *Husbands and Wives* gave us the first great film from a new, free-associating Woody—conventional style and structure splintering under the power of improvised emotion—*Shadows and Fog* is like a gentler dressage for that drama of deconstruction.

Across the dinky squares, through the picture-book fog and darkness, lope the funny-mysterious Lilliputians. In style the film is a toy-theatre spoof on German Expressionism, doing for Lang and Murneau what *Love and Death* did for Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. But *Shadows and Fog* is also about good and evil, destiny and predestination. Herr Kleinman—Allen with specs and nervous soliloquies—knows he has been "chosen" but cannot figure out what for. Farrow's runaway circus girl leaps into her fated midnight and finds a fated self-fulfilment. (She links up with Allen in what may be their last and most touching boy-meets-girl vignette.) And Doc Pleasence, pondering a morgueful of corpses, gazes straight and steely-eyed into the heart of life, death and the beyond.

Though Carlo Di Palma's black-and-white photography mimics a gloom-laden cine-Europe of 60 years ago, the film is also free-spirited enough to throw in some prime Woody repartee. (Farrow: "I slept with one man for money. Does that make me a whore?" Allen: "Only by the dictionary definition.") And a classically deft scene of romantic misunderstanding between Cusack and Malkovich shows that the director does not save all the good laughs for himself.

But *Shadows and Fog* is best when comedy balances on a knife-edge of the macabre; when the inquisitive despair that Allen over-formalised in his Chekhov-Bergman pieces *(Interiors, September)* is given the true texture of filmic malaise—human fear and defiance glittering in the shadows of the unknowable.

Nigel Andrews/*Financial Times*

Unforgiven (15)

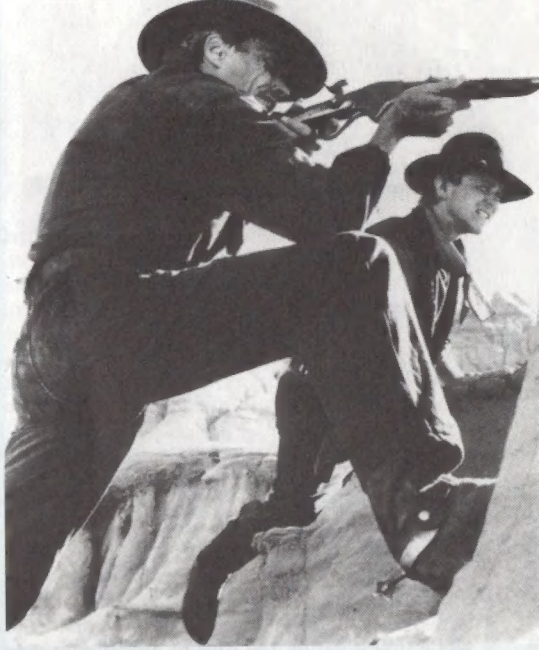
April 2-8

Director: Clint Eastwood. U.S.A., 1992.
Starring: Clint Eastwood, Gene Hackman, Morgan Freeman.
Colour. Panavision. Dolby Stereo. 131 mins.

Who better to revive the ailing Western than Clint Eastwood? What's heartening is not merely the fact that *Unforgiven* has taken the US box-office by storm, but that it's a truly magnificent movie, a serious, gimmick-free example of the genre that effortlessly transcends the plot conventions it so lovingly reworks.

For the film tells the familiar tale of a reformed gunslinger forced by circumstances to resume his violent ways. When a cowhand cuts up a prostitute who has mocked his virility, her colleagues—irate at the measly fine imposed by sheriff 'Little' Bob Daggett (Gene Hackman)—offer a bounty to any gunman who will satisfy their desire for justice. Keen to prove himself a man, the Schofield Kid (Jaimz Gertz) seeks help from Will Munny (Eastwood), a vicious-killer-turned-Kansas-pig-farmer who hung up his guns 11 years previously upon meeting his wife. But now she's dead, such is Munny's desire to give his children a better life that he reluctantly joins the bluff young Kid on the bounty-hunt, picking up former partner Ned Logan (Morgan Freeman) as they head for Big Whiskey, Wyoming. There, Daggett has already demonstrated his brutal notion of law and order by beating and humiliating another bounty-hunter, English Bob (Richard Harris); but the prospect of the reward offered by the vengeful women, and pity for the scarred victim, ensure that Munny, Logan and the Kid continue their quest, Daggett notwithstanding.

While Eastwood's muscular, no-nonsense direction shows (if proof be needed) that he is fully aware of genre traditions, he and scriptwriter David Webb Peebles have created something fresh, profound and complex. It's not merely a question of superior characterisation (embodied in excellent performances all round), but of conventional situations given a new,



surprising spin that lends depth to the film's interwoven themes. For example, the weight attached to both the prostitutes and the abiding spirit of Munny's dead wife introduces a feminist angle to what has always been regarded as a 'masculine' genre; the character of the sadistic but homely Daggett, whose no-guns-in-town policy blends a pragmatic desire for orderly peace with fascistic autocracy, provides insights into the thin line dividing law from justice; and the accent on ageing, fear and death establishes a darkness of tone perfectly complemented by Jack Green's austerely beautiful, sombre images . . .

It's persuasive, too, in the grubby authenticity of Eastwood's depiction of the West; but while such veracity is laudable, he understands that the genre, at its best, is inherently mythic. It's in this respect that the film is most exhilaratingly powerful. Rejecting conventional cowboy heroics as perpetrated by English Bob's dime-novelist biographer pal (Munny's violence is in the end shockingly gratuitous rather than admirable), Eastwood presents an alternative myth whereby a man, goaded by Furies to look back at and yield to a gun-crazy past that still haunts him, despatches himself to a living hell. And it's in this dark, timeless terrain, where 'reality' takes on the force of legend, that *Unforgiven* achieves a matchless intensity. It's unlikely we'll see a finer movie all year.

Geoff Andrew/*Time Out*

Bad Lieutenant (18)

April 2-8

Director: Abel Ferrara. U.S.A., 1992.
Starring: Harvey Keitel, Victor Argo, Paul Calderone.
Colour. 118 mins.

In films such as *Driller Killer* (1979), *Ms. .45: Angel of Vengeance* (1981) and *King of New York* (1990), maverick independent film-maker Abel Ferrara portrayed his native city as an open sewer where violent crime was epidemic. Now, with this fiercely uncompromising study of a New York police lieutenant (Harvey Keitel) strung out on drink, drugs and despair, he pushes crime cinema to new extremes.

Yet, paradoxically, as with drug lord Frank White's selfless attempts to save a threatened children's hospital in *King of New York*, there is a faint glimmer of hope (even a hint of redemption) amidst all this nihilism.

Already neglectful of his family, on the take from criminals, and consumed by self-loathing, lapsed Catholic Keitel finally goes over the edge while investigating the case of a nun who was gang-raped on the altar of her neighbourhood church. Unable to comprehend how she can forgive the rapists who defiled her ("I know them, they are good boys"), Keitel loses it completely, plunging downwards into a vortex of depravity and drug abuse. Only in the narcotic or alcoholic stupor afforded by heroin, crack or vodka can Keitel find escape from his spiralling gambling debts, psychological disintegration, and growing sense of a spiritual void. Finally, confronting the young Sister in the church late one night, Keitel begs her to name the perpetrators, and when she refuses, collapses to the floor in drunken oblivion. It is in this exhausted and confused state that he experiences a religious vision. Is it merely a drink and drug hallucination, or a moment of blinding clarity which offers a hope of salvation?

Like Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets* or *Taxi Driver*, Ferrara's films are not merely studies of violent men who inhabit a hostile urban milieu; they are also concerned with sin and spiritual redemption. This is a difficult balance to maintain, with a tendency to wallow in the violence and degradation while losing sight of the metaphysical underpinning. But thanks to Keitel's extraordinary performance, which pushes way beyond the script into an area of frighteningly naked self-revelation, Ferrara pulls it off brilliantly. With its rough-edged visuals and unflinching eye, this is painfully real and therapeutically shocking.

Nigel Floyd

BAD LIEUTENANT

The Quince Tree Sun (El Sol del Membrillo) (U)

April 9-15

Director: Victor Erice. Spain, 1992.
Starring: Antonio López, Maria Moreno, Enrique Gran.
Colour. Subtitles. 139 mins.

Few directors have achieved the recognition that Spanish film-maker Victor Erice has with only two features, *The Spirit of the Beehive* and *South*. *The Quince Tree Sun* is without a shadow of doubt the most extraordinary and accomplished film to come from anywhere this year. It's one of those rare works, often ahead of their time, which defy classification. In appearance the basic idea is simple to follow: the creative process of Spanish painter Antonio López (an artist who may spend seven years on a single painting) producing a composition of ripening quince fruits from a tree as a very delicate light traverses them. Whilst you may say this is a documentary in substance, the film involves such a multiplicity of ideas and interpretations around the act of painting that it ceases to be a documentary (as we understand the genre, at least) and becomes a profound meditation on time and the creative process. The result is over two hours of absorbing viewing. Intellectual and humanist in its purest sense, it's a challenging and original conception of cinema.

Rosa Bosch/*LFF Programme*

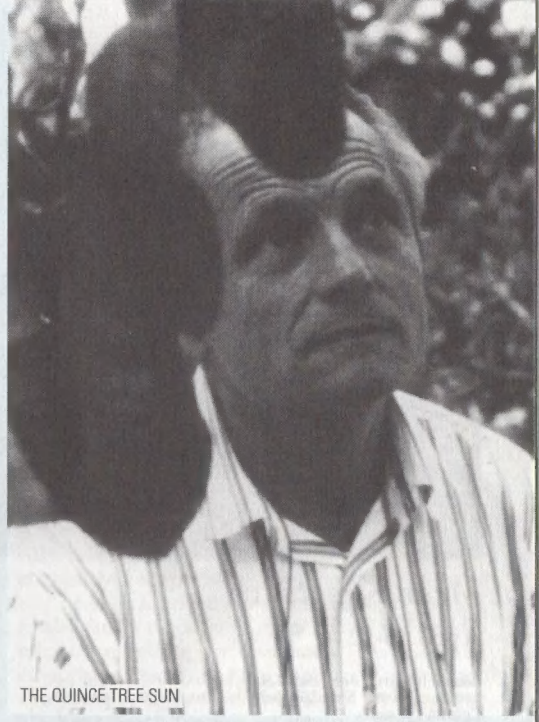
Singles (12)

April 9-15

Director: Cameron Crowe. U.S.A., 1992.
Starring: Matt Dillon, Bridget Fonda, Campbell Scott.
Colour. Dolby Stereo. 100 mins.

American films have done such a thorough job of trampling young love to death that a sweet film such as *Singles* takes you by surprise. Here are characters in their early twenties, with bills to pay and careers to nurture, mostly residents of the same Seattle apartment house, variously stricken by Cupid's darts. They are fresh, funny and, within the film's limits, entirely believable.

Environmentalist Linda (the excellent Kyra Sedgwick) burns her fingers with a Casanova and decides to forswear men. But her timing is bad: up pops civil engineer Steve, a perfect match, played by Campbell Scott, the poor little rich boy dying from leukaemia in *Dying Young*. Meanwhile, Bridget Fonda's Janet, an unfulfilled waitress, doggedly worships the indifferent Cliff,



THE QUINCE TREE SUN

a rock musician with a few brain cells missing. Matt Dillon takes this part, with a pinch of self-parody: it is his most pleasing performance in years. All characters are single, swept up in the film's dance of life, expertly choreographed by writer-director Cameron Crowe.

Crowe, 34 years old, is clearly a youth specialist. He profiled rock musicians for *Rolling Stone* magazine, and came to movies with the high school romp *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, based on his book. *Singles*, his second film as director, is particularly good at catching the beginnings of relationships: the fumbling encounters, the exploratory surveys of records, books and posters. Crowe has a sharp eye for social detail and knows how to use pop music: some 30 numbers threaded through the soundtrack feature Seattle groups.

For a mainstream venture, *Singles* takes a few risks. Characters talk to the camera; scenes are grouped under titles such as "The Hourglass Syndrome" and "What Took You So Long?". The discursive approach, and the lack of big stars, may be why this greatly engaging film has perplexed its distributors and failed to whip up a box-office storm. But there is real quality here that deserves a wide audience.

Geoff Brown/*The Times*

MEAN STREETS

Mean Streets (18)

April 16-22

Director: Martin Scorsese. U.S.A., 1973.
Starring: Harvey Keitel, Robert De Niro, Richard Romanus.
Colour. 110 mins.

Although it was not a first film for director Martin Scorsese or actors Harvey Keitel and Robert De Niro, *Mean Streets* is the work that established their reputations. Or at least it did in the minds of critics and cinephiles who were fortunate enough to see this extraordinary low-budget gem on its limited first release. Dogged by distribution problems for many years, *Mean Streets* has none the less grown in stature and is now regarded as one of the key American films of the Seventies. Scorsese and De Niro would go on to seal their reputations in one of the most remarkable collaborations in modern cinema, producing masterpieces with *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull* and *The King of Comedy*. Keitel, on the other hand, had to struggle through a varied but never less than interesting career (ranging from cameos for Scorsese to an astonishing lead performance in James Toback's *Fingers*) before receiving proper acclaim for his work on the recent *Reservoir Dogs* and *Bad Lieutenant*.

Now receiving a timely re-release, *Mean Streets* first appeared in the wake of Coppola's influential *The Godfather* to present a very different view of Italian-American life. Eschewing the operatic grandeur of Coppola's epic, Scorsese set his film in New York's Little Italy amongst the street folk he knew in his youth. His characters are essentially outsiders who operate on the fringes of organised crime. The hero, Charlie (Keitel), is torn between loyalty to disreputable friends and the business opportunities offered by a stern Mafia uncle. Charlie also suffers periodic bouts of Catholic guilt, but he can't resist the allure of a good time in the bars and clubs frequented by his pals. His best friend Johnny Boy (De Niro) is an irresponsible, violent free spirit who refuses to pay his gambling debts to loan shark Michael (Richard Romanus). Forever attempting to play the diplomat or go-between in a society ruled by strict codes of honour and loyalty, Charlie refuses to face up to the contradictions in his life and has to pay the price.

"You don't make up for your sins in church; you do it in the streets; you do it at home. The rest is bullshit, and you know it." These opening words in *Mean Streets* are followed by a loud rock song (The Ronettes' "Be My Baby") and mock home movie footage of Charlie in Little Italy. Scorsese plunges us into the world of his characters in a manner that's both direct and highly subjective. The result is a form of hyper-realism which imbues the entire film with a great sense of tension and energy. These qualities are apparent in the visual style (lots of hand-held tracking shots) as well as the dialogue and acting (there was a limited amount of improvisation). The randomness and violence in the lives of the characters are thus built into the very structure of the film.

"When we tried to get *Mean Streets* off the ground in Hollywood", said Scorsese, "the studio critiques were that it had a very bare story-line and it was filled with digressions. They didn't understand that the digressions are what the film is all about." Perhaps the most memorable of these 'digressions' is when an exasperated Charlie corners Johnny Boy about unpaid debts and is treated to a detailed and wonderfully amusing account of the week's series of disasters. De Niro and Keitel are both brilliant here, and it's all classic Scorsese.

Peter Walsh

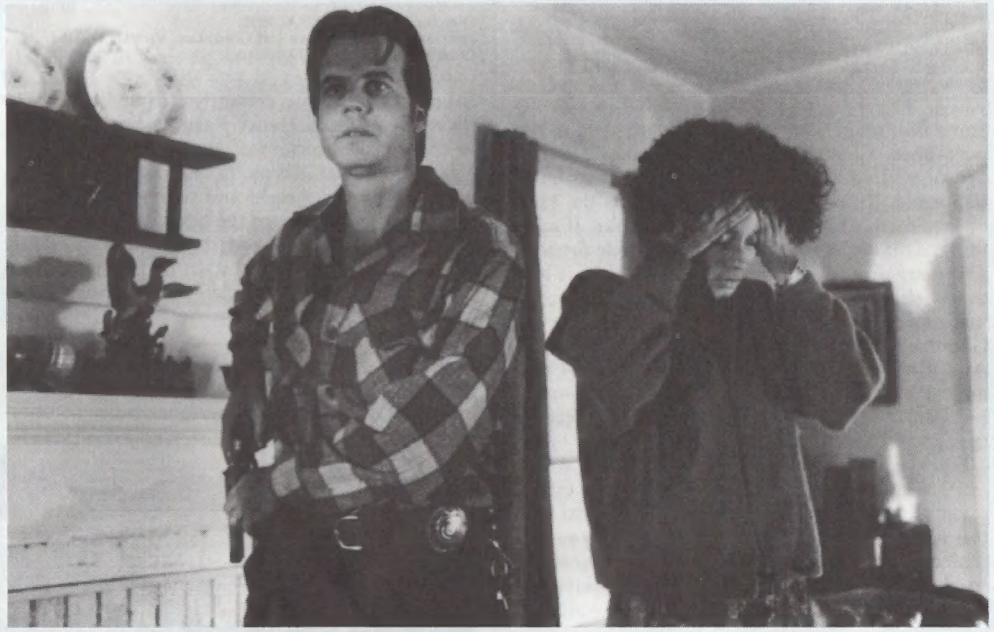
One False Move (18)

April 23-30

Director: Carl Franklin. U.S.A., 1992.
Starring: Bill Paxton, Cynda Williams, Billy Bob Thornton, Michael Beach.
Colour. 106 mins.

A small family party in South Central Los Angeles is violently disrupted when Fantasia (Cynda Williams), her volatile boyfriend Ray (Billy Bob Thornton), and his intelligent, ice-cold accomplice Pluto (Michael Beach) burst in and demand the address of a wealthy, powerful drug dealer. By the time the trio leave town, taking the dealer's stash and cash with them, the entire family has been slaughtered—except for a young child, who is found but spared by Fantasia. Filmed in unflinching, naturalistic detail, the murders are horrific and shocking; more importantly, they establish a jagged, discomforting tone that invests each of the subsequent confrontations with an edgy anticipation. Pursued by shrewd LA cop Dud Cole (Jim Metzler) and McFeely (Earl Billings), the three fugitives head for Houston, Texas, to sell the drugs; Fantasia, though, makes a detour to Star City, a small Arkansas town where her illegitimate child is being cared for by her family. Making this connection, Dud and McFeely contact the local red-neck sheriff, Dale 'Hurricane' Dixon (Bill Paxton), who is thrilled by the idea of big-time city criminals heading for his country patch.

A former actor turned director, Carl Franklin directed exploitation pictures for Roger Corman's Concorde films before making his mark with this remarkably mature personal project. Although the modest $2.5 million budget means there are some grainy images, these are more than compensated for by a deftly paced, skilfully constructed script that allows the action to grow out of the clearly defined characters. Having established a mood of grim inevitability, Franklin elicits compelling performances from actor and co-scriptwriter Billy Bob Thornton (who plays the jumpy, unpredictable Ray), black actor Michael Beach (as the calculating Pluto), and Cynda Williams as the passive, coked-up mulatto Fantasia. As the hyperactive 'Hurricane',



ONE FALSE MOVE

Bill Paxton gives his best performance to date, revealing the vulnerable side of his bluff, good ole boy persona as he realises that one of the criminals headed his way is someone who knows a secret from his murky past. To reveal what this is would spoil the effect, but as Franklin himself has said, "The whole movie is about atonement. It's about reaping what you sow".

Comparisons with the white trash *noir* novels of Jim Thompson are inevitable and the rural settings and casual brutality recall the film of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*. What makes the film so much Franklin's own, however, is his ability to do the simplest things well; when the trio are pulled over on a deserted country road by a suspicious State Trooper, Franklin slowly draws the scene out, upping the suspense with nervy exchanges of dialogue and delaying the payoff until the tension becomes unbearable. This assurance extends to the film as a whole, which integrates its implicit racial themes into the body of the narrative rather than addressing them explicitly, and is all the more telling as a result. Equally impressively, the film as a whole benefits from a controlled build-up, which like a slow-burning fuse finally ignites the cumulative charge of the narrative.

Nigel Floyd

Slacker (15)

April 22-25

Director: Richard Linklater. U.S.A., 1991.
Starring: Richard Linklater, Rudy Basquez, Jean Caffeine.
Colour. 97 mins.

Some film-makers are born, not made. And of the born ones, a few make films that look as if they are not films at all, but just happen to have happened. Richard Linklater's *Slacker* is the kind of free-form $175,000 project that looks, if anything, as if it just might have been made for less. There are around a hundred characters in it and to say they are in search of a plot would be an inaccuracy. Half of them aren't even looking for Godot. They simply drift in and out of the frame. And it is a considerable surprise to find out that almost all have not been picked up in the street but are actors—most of them the director's friends and acquaintances.

Slacker means, I am reliably informed, drop-outs from conventional society who are either unemployed or only do just enough work to feed themselves. They are, at their best, creative malcontents. At their worst, they are paranoid freaks. . . . I wouldn't accuse the homeless of being slackers but thought of this while watching the film, which is easily the most original American independent debut of the year and by some way the most entertaining. Linklater, while appearing to do nothing as a director, actually organises the film rather well. He appears in the opening scene, babbling almost dementedly at his silently gob-smacked cab-driver about *The Wizard of Oz* and, in particular, the scene when Dorothy meets the Scarecrow and doesn't know which way to go. His film, in contrast, takes every side turning it can. It's rather like a relay, in which one character passes the baton to another. . . .

Linklater says his film is about "the gene-ration that would have been aborted but it just wasn't hip at the time", and defines slackers as "spending their whole lives in their own heads, paralysed by the problem of making any difference". That seems as good a definition as any. And his film, though not exactly a breakthrough, since it mirrors a certain kind of sixties movie we all used to go to when we got fed up with Hollywood, is at least a genuine attempt to find out what has happened to another drop-out generation at a different time.

Derek Malcolm/*The Guardian*

Deep Cover (18)

April 29-30

Director: Bill Duke. U.S.A., 1992.
Starring: Larry Fishburne, Jeff Goldblum, Victoria Dillard.
Colour. Dolby Stereo. 112 mins.

Bill Duke's movie, co-written by Michael *The Player* Tolkin and Henry Bean, is far better than its overworked terrain of guns and drugs would suggest. What gives it its moments is its advanced sense of right and wrong, and sense of the thin divide between the two. Larry Fishburne, sensational in his first starring role, is a mid-West undercover cop brought in to infiltrate and destroy the West Coast drugs-ring whose members stretch up to the Latin American diplomatic corps itself. In a truly stunning opening sequence, we see the ten-year-old boy that becomes Fishburne's undercover man John Q. Hull cradling his junkie father, as he perishes on a doomed

Christmas attempt to rob a liquor store for dope-money. Twenty years later, Hull is a cop with a bad attitude problem, a man who obeyed his father's orders never to touch drugs but still has all the animal instincts of the dark side of the street.

In the process of his work, Hull is offered a child similar to the one he once was for a mere $2,000 by a drug-dependent neighbour, becomes involved in scenes of hideous violence at which he must remain composed and indifferent; and gradually becomes embroiled with Jeff Goldblum's zanily on-the-edge lawyer/user/dealer to the point where the duo start to get a taste for the action.

Eventually, the film bites off a little more than it can chew and reverts to type, but on the way it gives us a first-rate soundtrack, a clutch of splendid cameo performances, fine, grainy direction from Duke and much opinionated stuff about the hypocrisy behind the USA's so-called war against drugs. And Fishburne will blow your mind.

Steve Grant/*Time Out*

The Living End (18)

April 23-29

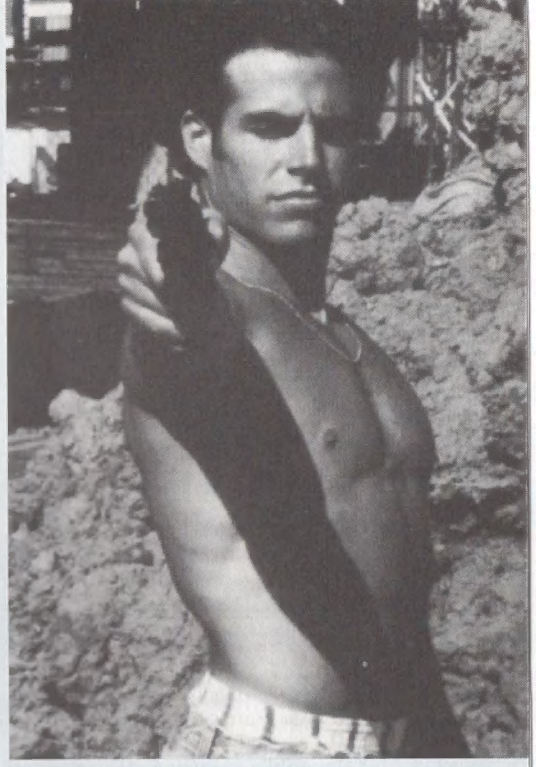
Director: Gregg Araki. U.S.A., 1992.
Starring: Mike Dytri, Craig Gilmore, Mark Finch.
Colour. 84 mins.

"Live fast, die young, leave a beautiful corpse", muses the film critic who has just found out that he's HIV positive in Gregg Araki's *The Living End*, a self-styled "irresponsible movie", made on next to nothing but a great deal more arresting as a study of *amour fou* than the sleek but only just sufficient *Damage*.

The film is about the critic's affair with a street hustler in a similar condition whose own motto is simply "Fuck the World". It is not a very pleasant experience, but underneath its hard skin of reckless contempt for the desolate, very American universe it traverses lies the same romantic hope for redemption through love that informs so many transatlantic shock movies.

Trapped in a Los Angeles populated by lesbian killers, fag-bashers, and bizarre street flotsam, the two men flee from the city to act out a violent sexual fantasy on the road that may or may not be love but is at least a measure of their joint despair . . .

But though it seems to lack hope, it also has an understandably self-pitying sentimentality. This is a strength, since that's how most of us feel



when the chips are finally down. This comes out most clearly in the relationship between the writer and his woman friend—the one anxiously trying to identify with his pain ("I'm here for you"), and the other receiving her affection with some relief as his lover goes further and further out of control.

The Living End's instant feel encourages a belief that it's some kind of a way-station on the road to hell, and its slightly studied homoerotic iconography, bleakly macho for the most part, underlines the point still more. But you only have to scratch this fatalistic surface to see its other side—an equation of sex with death that's actually a scream for help against the dying of the light.

This seemingly intemperate film pulls the emotions this way and that, encouraging both hostility and sorrow in equal measure. It makes us almost as uncomfortable as its two lonesome cowboys, and that's why it is at least a minor triumph, superior to both *Swoon* and *Poison* as an emotionally truthful product of a sad time. It's what some of those Paul Morrissey/Andy Warhol epics of the sixties might have been had they become activated by the fear of Aids.

Derek Malcolm/*The Guardian*

Matinees & Late Nights

Please see the calendar on the back cover for performance times.

Damage (18)

March 5-7

See under 'Main Films' for notes.

The Crying Game (18)

March 12-14

Director: Neil Jordan. U.K., 1992.
Starring: Stephen Rea, Miranda Richardson, Forest Whitaker.
Colour. Panavision. Dolby Stereo SR. 112 mins.

Writer-director Neil Jordan's latest and perhaps bravest film to date manages to bring together some of the strongest elements in his previous work, fusing the public nightmare of contemporary Ireland's political Troubles last touched on in *Angel* with the potent personal drama of obsessional romance expressed so affectingly in *Mona Lisa*. An exemplary Stephen Rea is Fergus, a South Armagh IRA man charged with the task of looking after British soldier Jodie (Forest Whitaker), recently taken hostage by two committed terrorists. During the soldier's last hours, captor and captive are to strike up an unlikely relationship, and when events force him to flee to London and find work as a brickie, Fergus makes good on his promise to visit the dead man's wife, Dil (startling newcomer Jaye Davidson).

THE CRYING GAME

This is just the moment when Jordan's narrative switches up a gear, introducing a plot reversal so outrageous that reviewers have been expressly forbidden to give the game away. At one fell swoop, a taut thriller develops into something else entirely, as Fergus's burgeoning feelings for Dil are to see him questioning the very roots of his own sexuality, while the unexpected return of some faces from the past force him to reassess everything he's been brought up to believe in.

Trevor Johnston

Orlando (PG)

March 19-21

See under 'Main Films' for notes.

Blade Runner – The Director's Cut (15)

March 26-28

See under 'Main Films' for notes.

Bad Lieutenant (18)

April 2-4

See under 'Main Films' for notes.

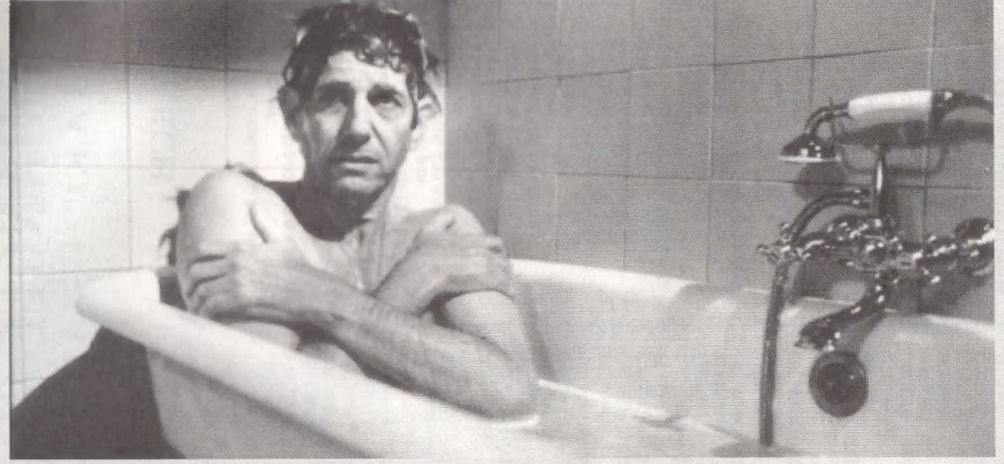
Bitter Moon (18)

April 9-11

Director: Roman Polanski. France/U.K., 1992.
Starring: Hugh Grant, Kristin Scott-Thomas, Emmanuelle Seigner, Peter Coyote.
Colour. Dolby Stereo. English dialogue. 135 mins.

Always an expert manipulator of the audience's emotions and expectations, Polish émigré director Roman Polanski here turns his hand to an erotic thriller laced with cruel black humour, tainted love and perverse sexuality. On board a luxury ocean-going liner, wheelchair-bound novelist Oscar (Peter Coyote) imposes himself upon straitlaced Englishman Nigel (Hugh Grant), making his stiff upper lip quiver with lurid accounts of an obsessive and ultimately destructive love affair with his stunning young wife Mimi (Emmanuelle

BITTER MOON



Seigner). In a series of flashbacks, we see Oscar and Mimi's relationship degenerate from love at first sight through ecstatic physical abandonment to bored sado-masochistic games. Caught up in Oscar's story, Nigel neglects his own wife, Fiona (Kristin Scott-Thomas), while drooling at the prospect of having sex with Mimi; but only if he hears Oscar's story through to the end. As events unfold, however, the emphasis shifts from jaded sexual acts to the sophisticated power games that ensue. Observing with an unblinking yet ironic eye, Polanski chronicles the subtly shifting allegiances, psychological manoeuvrings and intricate emotional torture. The result is a cruelly comic, deliciously perverse and erotically charged thriller which peels away the characters' protective layers to reveal the dangerous passions lurking underneath.

Nigel Floyd

GoodFellas (18)

April 16-18

Director: Martin Scorsese. U.S.A., 1990.
Starring: Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta, Joe Pesci.
Colour. Dolby Stereo. 145 mins.

It should be interesting to see Martin Scorsese's *GoodFellas* alongside the re-release of his earlier *Mean Streets*. Both movies draw their gangster protagonists from the lower echelons rather than the godfather class, and Scorsese's anti-heroes are a typically unsophisticated, unstable bunch of street-wise hustlers with ambitions to move up in the criminal world. Based on Nicolas Pileggi's true story of a New York mobster-turned-informant, *GoodFellas* covers a span of twenty years in its vivid account of chief protagonist Henry Hill's movement from awe-struck teenage mes-senger boy to successful thief, desperate drug-dealer and, finally, reluctant state witness. The difference between the two films has to do with the director's attitude towards his characters and the way this finds expression stylistically. Whereas *Mean Streets* is essentially sympathetic towards the plight of its minor-league Little Italy hoods, *GoodFellas* is relatively cool and detached in its depiction of crime as a way of life. Thus, while *Mean Streets*' dynamic though rough-edged style seems to reflect the world of its characters, in *GoodFellas* the mature Scorsese makes sophisticated use of cinematic devices to comment on the action and impose a critical distance for his audience. This is most evident in the movie's brilliant deployment of voice-over commentary, fast-paced editing and the freeze frame, with the latter literally stopping the often explosive action and forcing us to ponder its implications. Scorsese has come a long way since *Mean Streets*, and some critics have regretted his move into the mainstream with *Cape Fear*. However, on the evidence of *GoodFellas* he still seems the most exciting of contemporary American film-makers, and one who is capable of bringing new insights and approaches to bear on familiar material.

Peter Walsh

Slacker (15)

April 22-25

See under 'Main Films' for notes.

Deep Cover (18)

May 29-30

See under 'Main Films' for notes.

TRIANGLE CINEMA

MARCH - APRIL 1993

MARCH

1 Monday
DAMAGE (18) 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.
2 Tuesday
DAMAGE (18) 3.00, 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.
3 Wednesday
DAMAGE (18) 3.00, 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.
4 Thursday
DAMAGE (18) 3.00, 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.
5 Friday
THE LAST DAYS OF CHEZ NOUS (15) 2.30 & 6.45 p.m.
DAMAGE (18) 4.30, 8.45 & 11.15 p.m.
6 Saturday
THE LAST DAYS OF CHEZ NOUS (15) 2.30 & 6.45 p.m.
DAMAGE (18) 4.30, 8.45 & 11.15 p.m.
7 Sunday
THE LAST DAYS OF CHEZ NOUS (15) 2.30 & 6.45 p.m.
DAMAGE (15) 4.30 & 8.45 p.m.
8 Monday
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DAMAGE (18) 4.30 & 8.45 p.m.
11 Thursday
THE LAST DAYS OF CHEZ NOUS (15) 2.30 & 6.45 p.m.
DAMAGE (18) 4.30 & 8.45 p.m.
12 Friday
ORLANDO (15) 3.00, 5.00, 7.00 & 9.00 p.m.
THE CRYING GAME (18) 11.15 p.m.
13 Saturday
ORLANDO (PG) 3.00, 5.00, 7.00 & 9.00 p.m.
THE CRYING GAME (18) 11.15 p.m..
14 Sunday
THE CRYING GAME (18) 2.30 p.m.
ORLANDO (PG) 5.00, 7.00 & 9.00 p.m.
15 Monday
ORLANDO (PG) 3.00, 5.00, 7.00 & 9.00 p.m.
16 Tuesday
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17 Wednesday
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18 Thursday
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19 Friday
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22 Monday
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23 Tuesday
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24 Wednesday
ORLANDO (PG) 3.00, 5.00, 7.00 & 9.00 p.m.
25 Thursday
ORLANDO (PG) 3.00, 5.00, 7.00 & 9.00 p.m.
26 Friday
BLADE RUNNER—THE DIRECTOR'S CUT (15) 3.00, 8.45 & 11.15 p.m.
SHADOWS AND FOG (15) 5.15 & 7.00 p.m.
27 Saturday
BLADE RUNNER—THE DIRECTOR'S CUT (15) 3.00, 8.45 & 11.15 p.m.
SHADOWS AND FOG (15) 5.15 & 7.00 p.m.
28 Sunday
BLADE RUNNER—THE DIRECTOR'S CUT (15) 3.00 & 8.45 p.m.
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30 Tuesday
BLADE RUNNER—THE DIRECTOR'S CUT (15) 3.00 & 8.45 p.m.
SHADOWS AND FOG (15) 5.15 & 7.00 p.m.
31 Wednesday
BLADE RUNNER—THE DIRECTOR'S CUT (15) 3.00 & 8.45 p.m.
SHADOWS AND FOG (15) 5.15 & 7.00 p.m.

APRIL

1 Thursday
BLADE RUNNER—THE DIRECTOR'S CUT (15) 3.00 & 8.45 p.m.
SHADOWS AND FOG (15) 5.15 & 7.00 p.m.
2 Friday
UNFORGIVEN (15) 3.00 & 6.00 p.m.
BAD LIEUTENANT (18) 8.45 & 11.15 p.m.
3 Saturday
UNFORGIVEN (15) 3.00 & 6.00 p.m.
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BAD LIEUTENANT (18) 8.45 p.m.
8 Thursday
UNFORGIVEN (15) 3.00 & 6.00 p.m.
BAD LIEUTENANT (18) 8.45 p.m.
9 Friday
THE QUINCE TREE SUN (U) 3.00 & 6.00 p.m.
SINGLES (12) 8.45 p.m.
BITTER MOON (18) 11.15 p.m.
10 Saturday
THE QUINCE TREE SUN (U) 3.00 & 6.00 p.m.
SINGLES (12) 8.45 p.m.
BITTER MOON (18) 11.15 p.m.
11 Sunday
BITTER MOON (18) 3.00 p.m.
THE QUINCE TREE SUN (U) 6.00 p.m.
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SINGLES (12) 8.45 p.m.
15 Thursday
THE QUINCE TREE SUN (U) 3.00 & 6.00 p.m.
SINGLES (12) 8.45 p.m.
16 Friday
GOODFELLAS (18) 3.00 & 11.15 p.m.
MEAN STREETS (18) 6.30 & 8.45 p.m.
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21 Wednesday
MEAN STREETS (18) 3.00, 6.30 & 8.45 p.m.
22 Thursday
SLACKER (15) 3.00 & 7.00 p.m.
MEAN STREETS (18) 5.00 & 9.00 p.m.
23 Friday
SLACKER (15) 3.00 & 11.15 p.m.
ONE FALSE MOVE (18) 5.00 & 9.00 p.m.
THE LIVING END (18) 7.00 p.m.
24 Saturday
SLACKER (15) 3.00 & 11.15 p.m.
ONE FALSE MOVE (18) 5.00 & 9.00 p.m.
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SLACKER (15) 3.00 p.m.
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27 Tuesday
THE LIVING END (18) 3.00 & 7.00 p.m.
ONE FALSE MOVE (18) 5.00 & 9.00 p.m.
28 Wednesday
THE LIVING END (18) 3.00 & 7.00 p.m.
ONE FALSE MOVE (18) 5.00 & 9.00 p.m.
29 Thursday
DEEP COVER (18) 2.30 & 7.00 p.m.
ONE FALSE MOVE (18) 4.45 & 9.00 p.m.
30 Friday
DEEP COVER (18) 2.30, 7.00 & 11.15 p.m.
ONE FALSE MOVE (18) 4.45 & 9.00 p.m.